

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (currently amended) A method for performing an immunoassay—a qualitative or quantitative assay for protein oxidation, comprising the step of: detecting, in a sample, an amino acid sequence in an unwound a free-fragment form of type II collagen, said amino acid sequence comprising the sequence HRGY-NO<sub>2</sub>-PGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 64) or the sequence LQY-NO<sub>2</sub>-MRA (SEQ ID NO: 7) in which the amino acid residue Y-NO<sub>2</sub> is a nitrated tyrosine; or an amino acid sequence in a free fragment form comprising sequence HRGY-PGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1) and a nitrated tyrosine, by binding an antibody immunoreactive with said nitrated tyrosine in a context dependent manner so that said antibody has a higher affinity to said nitrated tyrosine of the sequence HRGY-NO<sub>2</sub>-PGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 6) or the sequence LQY-NO<sub>2</sub>-MRA (SEQ ID NO: 7) than its affinity to non-nitrated tyrosine of the HRGY-PGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1) or the sequence LQYMRA (SEQ ID NO: 2), respectively.

Claims 2 - 4 (cancelled)

Claim 5. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said amino acid sequence is within specific to and uniquely identified with a mammalian protein.

Claim 6. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said protein is present in joint tissue.

Claims 7 – 26 (cancelled)

Claim 27. (new)      The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the unwound fragment of type II collagen is in a linear form.